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Letter dated 1 April 2016 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that on Thursday, 14 April 2016, at 10 a.m., the Security Council plans to hold an open debate at the ambassador level on the theme "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts". The related concept note is annexed.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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Annex to the letter dated 1 April 2016 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Chinese]

Security Council open debate on countering terrorism

Concept note

1. Background

As President of the Security Council for the month of April, China intends to convene a Security Council open debate on 14 April on the issue of countering terrorism. Terrorism is one of the most severe security challenges in today's world and a common enemy of humanity. Recently, flagrant terrorist attacks in multiple places across the globe have shown the rising threat posed by terrorist and extremist groups, with their widening reach and greater capacity for destruction. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other terrorist organizations have seized large chunks of territory in Syria and Iraq and have perpetrated appalling acts of cruelty. It is estimated that around 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters from over 100 countries have flocked to the conflict zones and are exporting terrorism and extremism around the world.

World leaders expressed a strong political will to strengthen unity and cooperation and to jointly prevent and combat terrorist activities both during the general debate of the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, and in the statement on counter-terrorism issued by the G20 Summit in November. We must follow up on and implement this political will in the relevant work of the United Nations, build consensus among all Member States, and formulate concrete and effective counter-terrorism measures. The threat of terrorism will be eliminated once and for all only when all Member States unite as one, respond jointly and coordinate more effectively than terrorists do.

In June 2016, the seventieth session of the General Assembly will review the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The review will help Member States assess the characteristics and trends of terrorist activities, as well as the international response, promote international cooperation in countering terrorism and ensure the comprehensive and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy across the globe. As the main United Nations body entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has been committed in recent years to stepping up international cooperation to more effectively combat international terrorism. The Council successively adopted resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015) to promote international efforts to crack down on such terrorist groups as ISIL and al-Nusrah Front, to comprehensively cut off financing channels for terrorism and to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Moreover, Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) have provided a clear direction and guiding principles for countering terrorism and promoting cooperation in this regard. These resolutions of the Council must be implemented in a comprehensive manner by all Member States. The Security Council should attach importance to assessing new developments, features and trends in terrorist

activities, listen to the voices and opinions of all Member States and continue to play its coordinating and leading roles in international counter-terrorism cooperation.

2. Focus of the open debate

The open debate aims to provide a platform for Member States to exchange views on fighting terrorism and strengthening international counter-terrorism coordination and cooperation. The debate will also serve to build a positive momentum for the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly in June, and further solidify consensus among Member States on this issue.

During the open debate, Member States are encouraged to focus on the following topics:

- *Avoiding double standards in the fight against terrorism*. Terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any particular nationality, religion or civilization. All acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable whenever, wherever and by whomsoever they are committed. Terrorism poses a global threat, from which no Member State is exempt. It can only be defeated through joint actions. The United Nations is the most representative and authoritative intergovernmental organization. As such, what can be done to enable the United Nations and its Security Council to continue to play their coordinating and leading roles in international counter-terrorism cooperation?

- *Cutting off the sources of terrorist financing*. The disruption of financing channels is a vital and effective way to degrade and defeat ISIL and other terrorist organizations. Security Council resolutions 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015) have listed concrete measures to stop ISIL from gaining funds through such means as oil and cultural relic smuggling and kidnapping for ransom. While a decrease in ISIL's oil income is foreseen in 2016, this will not be enough to affect its normal functioning. The international community needs more in-depth consideration of how to destroy the financing mechanisms of ISIL and other terrorist organizations; how to disrupt their financial channels; and how to crack down more effectively on their financing activities.

- *Stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters*. The flow of foreign terrorist fighters has exacerbated regional conflicts and strengthened terrorist groups. These fighters may return home, thus increasing the threat of terrorism and the risk of terrorist attacks in their countries of origin. Member States are encouraged to consider how to formulate legal frameworks to criminalize foreign terrorist fighters; how to properly manage the security threat posed by the return of foreign terrorist fighters through more effective border controls, intelligence sharing and other measures; and how to help the countries impacted build the necessary capacity.

- *Preventing terrorists from using the Internet and social media to commit terrorist acts*. The Internet and social media have become frequently used platforms for terrorists to commit terrorist acts. In its resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2253 (2015), the Security Council expressed concern over terrorists using information and communication technologies such as the Internet to incite, recruit for, fund and plan terrorist acts, and underlined the need for Member

States to act cooperatively to prevent such use. We would like to invite Member States to share their views on how to more effectively prevent terrorists from using the Internet and social media (including audio and video recordings) to commit terrorist acts, such as by enacting relevant laws, strengthening industry regulations and promoting counter-narratives against terrorism. Moreover, in resolution 1624 (2005), the Security Council called upon all States to adopt measures to prohibit by law incitement to commit terrorist acts and to prevent such conduct. Member States are therefore invited to share their experiences related to national practice in combating violent and extremist ideology and to address the challenges in implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and resolution 1624 (2005), including how to protect young people and women from the threat of extremism.

- *Adopting a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy*. Member States are encouraged to consider ways to formulate a comprehensive strategy to eliminate the breeding grounds of terrorism by promoting social and economic development, strengthening inter-civilization dialogue and by other means.

3. Meeting arrangements

The open debate will take place on 14 April 2016 in the Security Council Chamber.

The meeting will take the form of an open debate. The Permanent Representatives of all States Members of the United Nations are invited to attend.